1: Raswan T-3 (1913-35) 1947 MD4 Rwala MD4

643 still living at the time of my last stay with the Ruala, had died.

953 Nuri was very astonished, but very happy, to see me again, well and in high spirits. He led me to his private room, which he had furnished according to his Bedouin taste. It was just like the interior of a Bedouin tent, with its coffee-hearth, its heap of white ashes, its mattresses and a profusion of cushions, which, propped against camel-saddles, were a positive incentive to indolence.

231 A broad-shouldered hunting-falcon stood on a foot-high perch, one powerful talon hidden under its plumage, ready to strike. Nuri removed its leather hood. Great black eyes glared at us and the bird crooned. Then old Nuri called for a pigeon and threw it into the air. With a movement swift as lightning, too swift for the eye to follow, the falcon pounced upon its prey and ripped it open.

181 Cruelty is inseparable from the Bedouin. He enjoys
● 157 seeing blood flow. Old Nuri seemed to renew his youthful ardour as he played thus with his falcon. In this world the strong do not always fight with the strong; the weak are so often victims of sheer brutality. In Arabia, in particular, this can never be forgotten.

619 A week later I resumed my journey. Nuri had given
628 me, as travelling companion and guard, Faris ibn Naif es-Sa'bi, a young Shammar Bedouin, so that I might make my way unmolested to the old chief's great tribe in the neighbourhood of Wadi Sirhan and the red sand of the far-off Nufud desert.

It was curious that a Shammar should act as my conductor to the Ruala, for these tribes have been bitter,

l: Raswan T-3 (1913-35) 1947 MD4 Rwala MD4

nay deadly, enemies for centuries. But the family of 619
Faris had, because of a blood-feud, been living with the 628
Ruala for the past sixteen years. This accounted for the fact that a Shammar could act as my protector in the territory of his tribe's deadly enemies; but the choice also displayed Nuri's wisdom. Being a Shammar, Faris could safeguard me with the enemies of the Ruala, while as Nuri's confidant, he could answer for me before every Rueyli.

Faris was an exceptional man. From the moment of 157
our first meeting, when Nuri introduced him to me, I felt that this must be more than a mere chance acquaintance. The softness of his voice, as he wished me "Peace", and the grip of his strong, manly hand in an instant disclosed to me the open and pure soul of the young Bedouin. Under his hair-cloth cloak beat a heart so affectionate, yet so stout, that I must confess I have never encountered its like among the children of men. To his last breath he was the truest friend I have ever known. Faris was also one of the handsomest men I have ever met. His noble, oval face was unforgettable, with its gentle, dark eyes. His wonderful hair and beard, his flowing shepherd's cloak, made him a striking figure. Tender and gentle as he was, Faris was yet among the boldest and bravest of Ishmaelites. Perhaps he was living two thousand years too late.

After we had left the old suburbs of Damascus be- 487
hind us, our way led through walnut, olive and apricot orchards into the great open spaces. Majestically the snow-capped peaks of the Syrian mountains rose into

l: Raswan T-3 (1913-35) 1947 MD4 Rwala MD4

not take sides against the French. The French authorities immediately realized the danger, and promptly gave orders that the ancient caravan route from Damascus to Tudmur (Palmyra) and Deyr-ez-Zor (which passes south of the hills of the Abu Rijmeyn and branches off near Tudmur towards Baghdad) was to form the most northerly boundary beyond which the Ruala might not seek pasture. None must cross this line if armed or mounted.

Now the foes of the Ruala could triumph!

The Saba, the Muwali, Hadediyyin and all the others had the law of the land and the power of the French Government on their side—and they were confederates of Ibn Meheyd! What did they care for the misery of the Ruala? They only saw at hand a long-desired opportunity to fall upon and destroy this hated Ruala nation and take possession of their vast herds.

It was a day in April, when our distress seemed to have reached the last extremity beyond which endurance could not go—when death stared every man and animal in the face—that I entered the tent of Faris, which was pitched on a hillock a little apart. The tent was empty. The mother and sister of the young man were probably searching for truffles, roots and dry herbs for fuel. As I flung myself down by the glowing ashes inside the tent, I heard the voice of Faris ibn Naif behind the tent. It was loud and excited, which was an unusual thing for him, for the calm and self-control of my friend had always been exemplary. He was neither a Philistine nor a bigot, but a man of a moral purity such as I never found surpassed, even among the Bedouins. I

1: Raswan T-3 (1913-35) 1947 MD4 Rwala MD4

wondered, therefore, that I should now hear Faris so excitedly wrangling with someone. But when I stepped round the tent and saw him, I was undeceived. He stood with clenched fists, his face raised to the sky, in an attitude of supplication. He obviously believed himself secure from human observation, and it was obvious also that he conversed with no human being.

He spoke to God, and his prayer was an expression of the anguish of his soul.

"Thou art merciful," I heard him cry. "Thou seest that our suffering and our dying have become cruel. We are starving to death. The helpless have no hope except in Thee. . . ."

Faris was a Muslim in name only. He cried out like a child to his Father. He implored—and raged in turn. He stamped his feet and clenched his fists in impotent fury. He bowed his head in humility—he raised his eyes in anger, but he also wept bitterly. He stretched out his empty hands, crying: "O Lord, the people perish, men and beasts starve, give pasture—give water—give bread—give peace. . . ."

Without letting him see me, I slipped back to his tent. I sat down by the hearth and poked with the fire-irons in the glowing dung, and held out my hands over it. Involuntarily I folded them and thought of the childlike faith of Faris, and I too begged God for aid. "Thou must help—the need is great; the herds are starving and the nation is dying."

When I raised my eyes, Faris stood before me. "Thou art sad, my Brother?" he asked affectionately.

I rose and grasped his proffered hand. "No," I said.

2:Musil S-4, 5 (no date)1928 MD4 Rwala MD4

Ḥubbi bil-ǧâl	Against the rocky wall beat
jâ delw ǧbâl	Thou, O Ǧbâl's bucket! [drawn by]
be'uẓûd rǧâl	The strength of arms of men
mâ hom ǧehâl.	Who are not heedless.

The bucket strikes against the rocky sides of a deep well, making the work of the men drawing it exceedingly difficult. When they feel that its edge has caught on some bulge of the wall, they must not jerk at the rope lest they injure the bucket or tip it and spill the water; they should, rather, merely rock the bucket slightly so as to bring it into the center of the well. Such deliberation, of course, is possessed by real men, *reǧâl*, not by harebrained, hasty, inconsiderate lads, *ǧehâl*, who think that all things can be accomplished by violence.

Jâ maljâna	Oh, the full bucket,
sallamha-llâh min ǧildnah.	May Allâh save it from the sides of the well!
Mâ jarwi-l-bel'	He shall not water his camels
rejr muserbel.	Who does not pull up [the rope] steadily.
Abjen abjen	More visible, more visible,
čânha bil-bin	If visibility be the question,
al-waẓha-bjen	A white she-camel is the more visible.
čânha bis-sin	If beauty be the question,
al-ḥamra-zjen	A brown one is more beautiful;
čânha bil-ṯil	But if a load be the question,
al-malha-ḥjel.	Then a black she-camel can stand more than all.
Tawwa' tfazza' bâli	Now my mind has cleared,
al-ḥouẓ beh efzâli.	For in the water trough there is a surplus.
Ab-ḥoel ǧrîd	The camels need
joum al-tawrîd	On the watering day
'abdân w-ekl	Two slaves and one master.
en ḥell al-'abd	If one slave gets tired
mâ ḥell ea-ekl.	Not so the master.

2:Musil S-4, 5 (no date) 1928 MD4 Rwala MD4

539x

O comrades mine! now I have drunk of satisfaction,
Because we have cleansed the stomach of its dirt.
And that in the cloud of dust that enveloped the foe
Between as-Swejda and al-'Ala'.

Já surbaten ǧat taḥtadi
má sannadaw ǧikhâlaha
wa' má 'aḏḏalnâhom w-'ajjú
já má baṭa! 'aḏḏâlaha.

When the troop came, singing its ditties,
The gay youths did not hold in their mares,
Oh, how we warned them and still they paid no heed!
Oh, what hero was even the least of that troop!

Surba is a troop of ten to twenty riders. *Taḥtadi*: it (lit., she) sings the *ḥda'* ditties. *Má sannadaw*: they did not hold back their mares on meeting a much stronger enemy. *Ǧâkel* (pl., *ǧikhâl*), a gay youth; já a youth between his fourteenth and eighteenth years, who is imprudent and will be neither advised nor remonstrated with. *Wa' má* has the same meaning as *já kuṯr má*, Oh, how much! *'Aḏḏalnâhom*: we warned them, we advised them to hold in their mares and to wait for help, for a counter attack, *faz'a*, from other camps; but they *'ajjú*, rejecting our warning, threw themselves on the enemy.

[157]

Já ṭejr já-lli ṭâlr al-ḫowm
sallem elja' ǧit ṭarḥúme
'allraha ḍa'ḍa' bel-ḫowm
telḳa' ta'âǧib be'lúmeh
wallaw ǧemá'eh rušškom lowm
alli ma' al-ḥejd mazmúmeh.

O thou bird of prey, who ever circlest above us!
A greeting, if thou wilt fly to Ṭarḥúme.
Her darling has shaken the enemy;
Thou shalt hear news of him to make thee wonder.
But his comrades fled — Oh, may so many reproaches
That they make the plain level with the hillside. [cover them

Ḥejd is a slope or hillside shutting in a plain.

Heǧǧi ḥaǧlǧ aṣ-ṣejd ma' waǧh al-ǧulwa'
ma' waǧh dazmin al-lḥa w-al-ǧawâreb.